



Housing Plan Implementation Committee

Date: September 3, 2020

Time: 6:30 PM to 7:30 PM

Location: Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Minutes

Present: Pam Hallett, Karen Kelleher, Jonathan Nyberg, Michelle Shortsleeve, Patricia Worden, Erin Zwirko.

Guests: Aram Hollman, Jo Anne Preston.

The first item on the agenda is to discuss engagement opportunities by identifying a couple of topics, schedule, and committee members to help out organize. Erin noted that the format is open; some topics might be best formatted as a focus group or a panel, others might be better in a different format. Erin noted that there are few topics on the work plan: follow up on the trust fund and real estate transfer fee, anti-displacement, the pandemic and its housing impact, systemic racism in housing, and equity in housing.

Karen noted that the virtual format of meetings could have the benefit of bringing in hard to reach people. She also noted that we should endeavor to reach out to younger residents and renters.

Patricia suggested that there should be a discussion with brokers so that the town could have the first opportunity to purchase homes to avoid tear downs. Jonathan asked if the town can make a quick decision that is often necessary. Erin noted that that would be the major benefit of the trust. Patricia noted that local non-profits might be able to act as quickly. For example, the Housing Authority could establish a non-profit arm.

Karen thought that it would be beneficial to discuss the trust and real estate transfer fee. Pam agreed that it would be great to educate the public on these topics. There are number of communities that are pursuing home rule petitions: Brookline, Nantucket, Concord, Boston, and Somerville. Karen and Pam offered to work with Erin on organizing an event.

Jonathan suggested focusing on behavioral racism, and join ranks around a topic and express a willingness to make a change in Arlington. Patricia noted that the Master Plan indicates that Arlington is outstanding in terms of diversity. She went on to state that

Arlington has always been a welcoming community; for example, it was one of the earliest METCO communities. Michelle asked if this would be an educational program or taking a stand, or both. She stated that people are open to having a conversation, and we should try to answer the questions of what does it take to effect change, and what are the barriers.

Erin indicated that she will work with the Committee to organize these events.

Jo Anne Preston, Mystic Lake Drive, recommended that the Committee encourage that the short term rental fee that comes back to the Town through registration fees should be directed into a trust. She wasn't certain of the funds available but it is also an enforcement issue to ensure that short term rentals are registered. Karen requested additional data from the Town. Patricia noted that it is a good suggestion, but she would be wary of tying it to the Trust until the Trust is established.

Aram Hollman, Whittemore Street, indicated that the coded language that been used here such as fear, NIMBY, and racism is inappropriate. He indicated when talking about affordable housing, you need to be precise about the level. Additionally, when speaking about diversity and affordability, you need to be clear about what you mean, for example, economic and racial diversity. He also noted that short term rentals need to be required to register.

On the minutes from August, Patricia made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Karen seconded the motion, and all those present unanimously approved to approve the minutes as amended.

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.